



Department of Justice

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MAN SENTENCED TO NEARLY 5 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON
FOR TRANSPORTING 14-YEAR-OLD GIRL THAT HE MET ON "MY SPACE"
FROM VIRGINIA TO TEXAS FOR CRIMINAL SEXUAL ACTIVITY

LUBBOCK, Texas — Branden Tye Holden, of Kennesaw, Georgia, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Sam R. Cummings to 57 months in federal prison, announced acting U.S. Attorney James T. Jacks of the Northern District of Texas. Holden, 19, pled guilty to one count of interstate transportation for criminal sexual activity in January 2009. Judge Cummings also ordered that Holden serve a 10-year term of supervised release and register as a sex offender. Holden is presently in custody.

Holden admitted that he and Jane Doe, a 14-year-old girl who lived in Virginia, met on "My Space." Although Doe was actually 14, her My Space profile identified her as a 17-year-old female. In telephone conversations, Holden and Doe discussed engaging in sexual relations with one another.

On Thursday, September 25, 2008, Holden left his home in Georgia and drove to Virginia to pick up Doe and bring her to Georgia. After her parents went to bed, she left the house and met Holden who was parked a block from her residence, at a park. The next day, Doe told Holden that she really was 15-years old. Holden then began driving from Virginia through North Carolina, South Carolina and into Georgia, stopping along the way at rest areas where they had sexual relations.

On September 26, 2008, while he was near Augusta, Georgia, Holden received a phone call from his mother who told him that he was being sought by law enforcement for kidnapping. His mother told him that the girl he was with was only 14-years-old and that he needed to go to Woodstock, Georgia, and turn himself into authorities. At that time, Holden and Jane Doe decided to head west.

On Monday, September 29, 2008, Holden was stopped by a Texas Department of Public Safety Trooper in Crockett County, Texas, and was arrested. Jane Doe was with Holden.

Holden estimates that he engaged in sexual relations with Jane Doe approximately 10 times during his travels with her.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafchildhood.gov

The case was investigated by the FBI and the Texas Department of Public Safety. Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven M. Sucsy of the Lubbock, Texas, U.S. Attorney's Office was the prosecutor.

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